

FIELD REPORT

*Preliminary visits to districts
Household Survey*

**Alwar, Rajasthan
Dewas, Madhya Pradesh**

July-September 2006

Submitted by

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FIELD REPORT

Project Title:

Improving the Outcomes of Education for Pro-Poor Development – Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation

Duration of Field Visits

The fieldwork was divided into two phases. The first was a two week phase in the latter half of July. The second was in August and September 2006. The two phases are discussed below.

Phase 1

Time period: July 18-July 28, 2006

Team members: Rashi Bhargava, Roger Jeffery, Vikram Meghwal, Srimanti Mukherjee, Claire Noronha, Rosamma Thomas.

1. Objectives

In phase 1 the researchers visited the two sample districts along with Roger Jeffery and Claire Noronha. The objectives here were as detailed below:

- To follow up the workshop on scoping in mid July 2006 with a period in which the procedures for qualitative fieldwork were discussed and where possible demonstrated.
- To make useful contacts in the bureaucracy and with NGOs and with helpful members in the community
- To select the sample sites for the main qualitative work, both rural and urban in the two districts.
- To understand the logistics for the ensuing fieldwork in August and September.

2. Methodology

Preliminary work:

- Building up a base of local contacts, contact details of NGOs and bureaucrats.
- Understanding the district selected in terms of the concerns of the research to be undertaken. This included the size and location of villages, availability of educational facilities, training facilities etc. Census data proved useful.
- Preparing flyers to facilitate introduction of RPC to bureaucrats and NGOs as well as local community.
- Training workshop to introduce and discuss the objectives and methods to be used in the scoping phase (July 13-15 2006)

Sample Selection Method

For each state the criteria for sample selection were first discussed by Roger Jeffery and CORD. The former's experience in qualitative research proved useful when selecting the sample. The latter's understanding of the educational scenario in India proved useful too. The major criteria for sample selection were as follows:

- a. Good educational outcomes. For this the presence of a secondary school was felt to be useful as such areas would at least have access. A level of class 8 or class 10 in a fair number of the male and female population was felt to be desirable.
- b. Heterogeneous social composition rather than a homogeneous group. (However Roger Jeffery also advised us that it was more useful to have a sizeable cluster of different social groups rather than just a few households).
- c. A population of 250-350 households would be optimum but this could be stretched to 500.
- d. NGO activity or opportunities for participation in public life would be useful
- e. For skill development, proximity to an ITI, industrial area, or urban area.
- f. Safety and accessibility for our researchers.

3. Process

Both districts were visited in the **latter half of July** by the research team. Roger Jeffery and Claire Noronha, Srimanti, Rashi, Rosamma and Vikram went to Alwar district first. After this trip Rosamma withdrew and Srimanti and Rashi came to Dewas with the seniors. Since neither site had had any preliminary work earlier Roger Jeffery and Claire went ahead to establish contact.

In both districts the team paid several visits to local bureaucrats and also visited NGOs and other contacts. Visits to suggested sites accompanied by discussion about relative merits and demerits was the methodology followed for sample selection. The preliminary work on building up an information base and networking was also useful.

4. Results

The visits proved extremely fruitful on the following scores:

- Going through the process with an experienced qualitative researcher like Roger Jeffery was a good introduction to scoping. In appropriate order different bureaucratic levels were tackled, always sensitive to the pressures in each place.
- The many discussions with Roger proved useful during the field work later. For example, we confronted the problem of finding very large sample sites which were suitable on other parameters. So we discussed how this should be tackled.
- Meeting different local dignitaries and others:
- The **Collector** of Alwar, **Shri Rajeev Singh Thakur**, and the **Collector** of Dewas **Shri Uma Kant Umrao** were the first to whom we paid courtesy calls in the districts. Both were very cordial and promised all cooperation.

At **Bhopal** we had met the **Education Secretary, Shri I.S. Dhani** and the **Principal Finance Adviser, Shri Sumeet Bose**. We also met the **Commissioner of Education Shri MK Singh and Kaamna Acharya of the SSA**. Although we were unable to get data from them they said all will be available at district level.

The **DEOs** of both districts as well as the **Director in charge** of **SSA** were visited. Where officials were interested we had extensive discussions. In some cases we also managed to acquire much secondary data.

- o Visit to Alwar with Kenneth King (17 and 18th July 06)

N.P. Varma, Principal, ITI, Alwar was a fund of information on the student body, the courses, the demand and the reasons why ITI graduates were still unemployed three years later. He feels it is a labour market phenomenon in which employers reluctant to give permanent status and benefits to their employees resort to firing them.

Amitoz Institute: This private ITI also offered rich insights into the quality of these institutes and their possible contribution to the skills training initiatives being undertaken.

- o Good contacts with local NGOs were established or carried forward. In Bhopal there were **SAMAVESH, EKLAVYA** and **SAMARTAN**. Contacts in the two districts were immensely useful. These were **BODH** and **Matsya Mewat Shiksha Sansthan** in Alwar and **EKLAVYA** in Dewas.

The NGOs were invaluable in helping us to select sample sites and giving us the needed local introductions.

- o Arvind and Anu of EKLAVYA, Dewas were more than helpful. They were knowledgeable about research issues as well. They helped Roger Jeffery to identify Jamgodh as the village which had been studied by Adrian Mayers many decades earlier. He also rolled out many precious maps as we discussed the RECOUP sampling needs.

Selecting the rural and urban samples

ALWAR

Rural sample

Census 2001 data had enabled the researchers to zero in on possible villages of the right size, and with a secondary school, at both Alwar and Dewas. At the time of the scoping it was felt that such villages could be assumed to have good education outcomes.

Mr. Captain Singh and Mr. Prem Narayan of Bodh Shiksha Samiti (BSS) suggested Bijwar, Umren, Akbarpur and Malakhera while Mr. Virendra Vidrohi of Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) suggested Kithoor, Karoli and Chikani. After a preliminary observation of all the villages and much discussion, it was decided to select Akbarpur as the sample. It appeared to be of the right size, had a mixed social composition, good educational levels and other parameters required.¹

Urban sample

The selection was more difficult. BODH had just begun to map the slum areas. Discussions with several local informants yielded the information that most slums were only 25-60 households. BGVS suggested Munguska and Samola as sample slums. But field visits showed that social composition and education level criteria in these places were unsatisfactory. Later, discussions with Virendra Vidrohi and a visit from Kenneth King and Claire Noronha helped to zero in on the Family Lines slum.

¹ However, later there was an enormous problem as the report will discuss later as most residents were confident that Akbarpur was much larger than had first been suggested.

DEWAS

Anu and Arvind worked extensively with local schools and felt that the presence of a secondary school was absolutely no guarantee of good educational outcomes. Secondary schools could have no infrastructure at all and middle schools could well be running better. Another difficult point about Dewas district was that it was in an industrial decline phase whereas we had assumed good industrial development.

Rural sample

Five villages namely Jamgod, Pandlia, Sia, Nevri, and Rajoda were suggested by Eklavya, the premier education NGO which has a base in Dewas. The researchers went to the suggested sites for a rapid appraisal before deciding on the site. Jamgod was felt to be suitable for several reasons: it was the right size; it had a mixed social composition, a head teacher known to our friends at Eklavya and a welcoming disposition in the community.

Urban sample selection.

Here too the slum areas were in the process of being mapped. So little information was available. Guidance was received from Ritu Vyas, an NGO worker with more than ten years of experience. The contact was through Eklavya again. Among the two *ayodhya bastis*² Nusrat Nagar and Sanjay Nagar, the second one was selected as it had a mixed social composition and quite a good level of education standard.

Phase 2

Time period and personnel involved

The main period of data collection was in August and September 2006. The fieldwork was interspersed with some time in the Delhi office.

Alwar Rural	4 to 10 August 2006	Rashi Bhargava, Srimanti Mukherjee and Rosamma Thomas
Rural	18 Aug. to 5 Sept. 2006	Rashi Bhargava and Vikram Meghwal
Urban	13 to 21 September 2006	Rashi Bhargava, Subrata Kundu and Vikram Meghwal
Dewas Rural	18 to 27 August 2006	Srimanti Mukherjee, Subrata Kundu
Urban	8 to 23 Sept 2006	Shyamasree Das Gupta and Srimanti Mukherjee

² The 'ayodhya basti yojana' was a Madhya Pradesh government scheme. Of the hundred or more slums in Dewas two were selected around 25 years ago. All types of facilities were to be given to these 'model' slums. Roads, electricity and water have been provided. But sanitation facilities have not been completed.

1. Objectives

The main tasks in this phase were to map the areas selected, both rural and urban and then to conduct a household census in the communities. The researchers were also expected to collect secondary data available. This exercise had several objectives:

- To build up a profile of the community, its living conditions and the facilities available to it. Since care was taken to keep cluster composition of the community in mind, community mapping was also possible.
- To enable the researchers and the community to become better acquainted and if possible to build up a rapport. It was hoped that considerable qualitative data could also be collected.
- To collect such information as would enable researchers to make a selection of households for the various projects under theme 1 and theme 2.
- To build up a picture of the district in terms of education, employment etc.

2. Methodology

The main instrument was a structured interview schedule for individual households in the community. This was intended to capture the socioeconomic details of each household, the educational and occupational details and other information needed for the selection of the sample. This schedule was largely a replica of a schedule earlier used by Roger Jeffery (See RECOUP Methodology discussion papers. Paper no 15) and had been adapted for the purposes of this research. However, researchers were also expected to capture other relevant information about households in the process of rapport building.

For the mapping the teams were equipped with drawing paper and colours.

The research staff generally comprised two trained researchers from CORD and two from the respective sites. The field researchers recruited for the project at each site were quite helpful in carrying out the household survey.

The fieldwork process and preliminary insights gathered for each of the two sites, will now be discussed. The reports on the Alwar sites – rural and urban will be followed by those on the Dewas sites, again both rural and urban.

FIELD REPORT –Alwar Rural

Village: **AKBARPUR**

Panchayat: Umrain

Block: Umrain

District: Alwar

State: Rajasthan

Researchers involved: Rashi Bhargava and Vikram Meghwal
Srimanti Mukherjee (4th-10th August 2006)

The objective and the methodology of this phase have been elaborated earlier. Here we discuss the process followed by the preliminary insights.

1. Process

The fieldwork to complete the task of the Household census in the rural sample site was bifurcated into mapping and the actual household survey. The broad mapping of the place helped us to acquire a sense of the place and the spread of the various communities in the village which was helpful in finding our way into the village during the household census. During that task we got some time to interact with the villagers who seemed quite curious to know the reason for our presence in the village. However, the mapping was prolonged by the uncertainty about the size of the village. We also gave the flyers about RECOUP to people who asked for the details of our project and seemed interested in knowing the nuances of it. There were also some people who wanted some written material that could provide information about us and our organization. In that case also the flyers came in handy. Thus, as we interacted with the villagers, it gave them time to know both the project as well as the researchers.

After mapping we started with the household census with the aid of the schedule which was designed for the survey. Here our main task was to secure information about every household of the village. All through the household census we got a chance to interact with the residents of the village on an individual basis and also an opportunity to build some rapport to facilitate interaction in our future visits to the place. But the real rapport that was constructed with the villagers was through the repeated visits to the area and acknowledging their presence each time we met them later. There were times when before we asked any question, people came up with a series of questions about both our personal and professional lives. At such moments one really has to be careful in dealing with the other person and has to patiently answer all their questions. This is a critical moment for building a trust between both the parties.

Limitations faced

- Finding the local researchers was the problem that confronted us in the very beginning. This was solved with the help of the local contact – Reema of the Day to Day Development Society.

- Another problem that cropped up was that it was the month of a lot of “tyohars”³ both general and local. During the mapping phase, the work got delayed because of “Rakhi”⁴ and when we were engaged in the Household census, the tyohars like “Pandu Pole ka Mela”, “Bhartari Baba ka Mela” And “Thakurji ka Tyohar”⁵ disrupted our work. The great value of these occasions can be calculated from the fact that the State Roadways Transport Corporation deploys some 30-35 buses especially for the *melas* every year. Thus there is a lot of rush in the buses which was our only mode of commuting to the village.
- In addition to this there was also a rally in Jaipur which attracted a lot of people from the village as they were paid Rs. 50 in addition to the charges for conveyance and food.
- Collecting data on assets also caused difficulties as the villagers were quite apprehensive and many times they asked as to why we were taking account of the assets particularly if the study is on education. Some people also mistook the study for the BPL survey and tried to conceal their assets.

Observations on the schedule

- The question on age was the one which may not have fetched right answers every time as the villagers were not sure about their age and often asked us to fill it up ourselves. We tried to probe into that as much as we could but are not very confident about the final answers.
- The ‘distance’ column in Section C was also a problem as the villagers are not very sure of the distance in terms of kilometers and thus it has been either filled up by asking the duration of time taken to reach the place or has been left blank.
- Section C, the ‘prior relationship’ column was found to be not generating sufficient response in this type of survey.
- The ‘Caste Panchayat’ column was found to be not relevant in Section E.
- There were no VEC or PTA/MTA found in the village. However this aspect needs more verification.
- Even the question on the head of the household generated different type of answers. There were some who took the eldest person irrespective of the sex in the family as the head while at other places the earning member of the family was considered as the head. The difference in the response gives a hint as to the different perceptions of the people.
- We have added code -5 in the “work status” column for housework.
- We have added code- 4 in the “education status” column for cases where the person concerned has completed more than class 10.
- Management of schools finally was reduced to 2 categories (1- government, 2 – private).

³ Tyohar - festival

⁴ Rakhi – a festival celebrated in North India when the girls tie a thread called rakhi on their brothers’ wrists.

⁵ Pandu pole ka mela.....tyohar – religious festivals specific to the region.

2. Some Preliminary Insights

2.1 General Details

a) *Physical characteristics*

Akbapur, located at the foothills of the Aravalli range is the sample selected for the rural site in the state of Rajasthan. It is situated on the Alwar- Jaipur State highway (SH – 13), some 17 kms from the city, Alwar. The village is bounded by the Aravallis on the west and the Alwar- Jaipur State highway on the east. The Murtikars⁶ live at the northern end of the village while the area occupied by the Meos⁷, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Meenas⁸ delineates the village boundary on the southern end. The most characteristic feature of the village is the “bazaar”⁹ located right in the center of the village.

b) *Demography*

Initially there was confusion about the total population in the village as the answers received were very diverse. According to the Census figures of the year 2001 the number of households was 539. The Below Poverty Line (BPL) list handed to us by the Secretary in the Panchayat Samiti¹⁰ gave some 756 as the total number of households while the villagers were confident of above 1500 households. But our survey of the village gave 461 as the total number of households in the village. The total surveyed population was 2758.

The village comprises many different social groups which form clusters in terms of the area they occupy in the village. The Muslims in the village were concentrated in one end and were not very high in number. The Scheduled Castes¹¹ and the General Castes¹² were nearly equal in number but the main area of the village i.e. the “bazaar” area was inhabited by the general castes. The other backward castes¹³ were also quite high in number. There were a few families of the Scheduled Tribe (ST)¹⁴ as well.

c) *Occupation*

In Akbarpur, the most interesting feature that was observed was that there was some correlation between the castes and the occupations they were in. For example, nearly 99% of the *Baniya* community owned a shop in the bazaar or the Brahmins were into astrology or into the role of cleric, the *Nais* were into hair cutting and the *Dhobis* were practicing their traditional occupation of ironing and washing of clothes.

However, there were some groups who have moved away from their traditional occupation but some similarity was still observed. For instance, the Scheduled Castes though were not into scavenging or weaving yet they were involved in low status and low paid occupations like wage labour or sweeping.

There were many who were in the government jobs like the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Army or the state forest department. But

⁶ Murtikars – a caste of sculptors

⁷ Meos – a Muslim Gujjar tribe

⁸ Meenas – scheduled tribe in India

⁹ Bazaar - market

¹⁰ Panchayat Samiti- the intermediate level of the panchayat (village local body) mandated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992

¹¹ Low castes like Balais or Meghwals (weavers), Khatiks (butchers) and the Harijans

¹² High castes like the Brahmins, Baniyas and the Sindhis.

¹³ Kumhars and Ahirs – low ranking service castes amongst the Hindus. Ahirs are a subgroup of the yadav caste and both kumhars & ahirs are considered as OBC in India

¹⁴ Scheduled Tribe – Meena & Dhanka, given the ST status by the government of India and therefore are entitled to reservations in Government jobs, colleges, etc

these were mainly from the Meena community who unlike the SCs has been able to take advantage of their reserved category status, as reported by one of the locals.

The Muslims in the area were mainly into cultivation. One could observe that nearly everyone among the Meos owned land and at times the amount of land owned was very small.

One occupation that was specific to the region was sculpting. Akbarpur is one of the hubs of sculptors in Rajasthan. The place is quite well known for its “Murtikars”. In fact there were some families who have migrated to the place either long back or have rented a house in the village because of this art in the area.

d) Sanitation & Water Supply

The difference between the areas was also visible as far as living conditions and the sanitation of the area is concerned. In the area inhabited by the Meos, Harijans and the SCs, one could see dirty streets, poor sanitation facilities and semi-pucca houses. The only area of the SC community where the condition was a little better was the area near the Sarpanch’s¹⁵ house. Even though the streets in the main area of the village were not too broad but definitely were in a better condition than the rest of the village.

The village has two water boxes which are the source of the drinking water in the village. There were a number of wells too. The villagers never talked about the scarcity of water but during our stay in the district, we found quite a lot of posters and ad-campaigns all over the place focusing on the issue of water. There were a small percentage of houses that had flush toilets.

e) Power Supply

The power supply was quite erratic in the village (4-5 hrs a day). In fact the major problem that the villagers often complained about was that of ‘electricity’. When asking questions about the assets many used to answer ‘*hai toh sab kuch lekin chalane ke liye bijli kahan aati hai*’ (we have every thing but there is no power supply).

f) Assets & Socio-Economic Status

The diversity in the socio-economic positions occupied by the various groups in the village was not so difficult to capture (though there were some people in the village who tried to conceal their actual status). The well to do households (having pucca houses, air coolers, fridge, bicycles, etc) of the village were mainly those of the Baniyas, Brahmins and the Sindhis. The Meena and some households of the Kumhar community were also quite well off.

2.2 Educational profiles and issues

Akbarpur has a mixture of both government and private schools. It has three government schools –a primary school, a middle school and a secondary school. These are operating under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Keeping in mind the fair number of girl drop outs, the government has also started a bridge course for duration of three months for the girls under 14. This is under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and is an attempt to bring the drop outs back to the mainstream education. During our visits we did find the program working. In addition to the government schools, there are seven private schools – Shivaji Vidya Mandir, Mriduraj Public School, Ashadeep Public School, Mudgal Public School, Arun Public School, Novel Modern Public School, and Shri Har Kishen Public School (all

¹⁵ Sarpanch – head of the village local government

middle schools). All these schools have come up fairly recently, Novel Modern Public School being just a few months old.

Because of the proximity to Alwar city, quite a few young boys and girls went to Alwar for their schooling at secondary level. In any case they had to go to Alwar to access college education. At times they also stayed in the city itself for their education. Generally the children from the most affluent families of the village did this. The good thing that we found was that it was also true for the girls and not just limited to the boys.

The most striking aspect that we came across in the area was the growing preference of the parents for the private schools. But the ones who were at the higher rungs of the social and economic ladder were the ones who could access private education easily. We also observed that even the houses where the members, both the men and the women, were engaged in wage labour tried to send their kids to the private school but in such cases, there were instances where the girls were sent to the government school while the boys were admitted to the private schools. However, the government schools were still important for the parents who wanted their kids to study but had no money for the private schools. In fact at the secondary level there was just the government school as all the private schools were up to the middle level.

The difference among the generations was also quite marked. The older generation had very few educated men and nearly no educated women. And the education level was very low for those who had been to school. In the generation after that, there were both educated men and women. But in the younger generation there were quite a lot of educated men and women who have been to college as well. And amongst the people of this generation there was awareness for the education of their younger brothers and sisters and children. When asked about the management of school they have been to, last, the answer was government schools for nearly all the people in the older generation but for the younger lot it was generally private.

There were some people who did show their resentment for the government schools. This could well be captured from a remark from one of the men from the Harijan Mohalla, “issi ko dekh lijiye, 6th mein hai lekin, apne pita ka naam bhi nahin likh sakta hai, aisi padhai se kya fayda” (look at this boy, he is in sixth standard but he cannot even write his father’s name.) There was, however, a concern for the education of the younger lot, in general. This was one of the matters in which the thinking of the people crossed their caste and class boundaries.

2.3 Gender relations

There was a clear demarcation between the spaces occupied by the two sexes in Akbarpur. The men were more visible in the public space, roaming around in the village without any particular reason, chatting with other men and even playing cards on the streets near the bazaar area especially in the afternoon. The women were only seen in and around the bazaar area, if they had some work. Even at times when they had any urgent thing to buy they did not go out of the house. This, we noticed at a Brahmin household where the daughter-in-law was not allowed to go out even when necessary. However, the norms for the women were not universally applicable and differed according to age, caste and her relation to the village. Like, the observance of *ghunghat* (veil), or the strict vigilance on their conduct and their movements was applicable to the women folk in general but was stricter for the daughters-in-law especially of the younger age.

The distinction between the two genders was also observed in the kind of work they were involved in. There were more men in full time work while the women were confined to the household chores. Some women were in part time work (mostly working

on farms) but many a time that was for the family itself. But amongst the SCs both the women and the men were into wage labour as the household income was very small.

There were quite a good number of early marriage cases (around 15 years of age), mainly in households where two or more sisters were married off at the same time, mostly to lessen the expenditure involved in marriage. This was a common feature in the Meo community. Due to this the education level of the girls automatically came down. Though there were early marriages for the boys (about 18-19 years of age) as well, it did not much hamper their education as they did not have to leave their natal homes (as the girls are supposed to do).

Most of the girls and boys in the age group of 4-12, were enrolled and the parents seemed to be as concerned about their daughters' education as they were for their sons, though the reasons could not be said to be the same. But the son- preference that has been the constant feature of the patrilineal societies was very much a part of the lives of the people in Akbarpur. There were quite a few households where the number of kids was quite large mainly because they wanted a son in the family. However, there were cases where the size of the household was large and that did not seem to be just because of son preference rather the size was generally so.

2.4 Skill training and livelihood issues

In Akbarpur, we were quite amazed to find a decent number of people mainly from the upper castes who had either been or were going to Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). Most of them were accessing the ITI in Alwar but there were quite a few who did go to Barmer (another city in Rajasthan) as well. This came as a surprise mainly because the place is reasonably far from Akbarpur.

Another surprising occurrence that struck us most was that there were few girls in the Sindhi and the Baniya community who were enrolled in an ITI for the electrician course. Generally it is rare to find girls opting for such courses. Though the people in Akbarpur did have access to the ITIs, there were very few who had a decent job after the completion of their course. In fact there were many men who were engaged in low paid jobs or wage labour even after a diploma from an ITI.

In addition to the training available at the ITIs, the people were also acquiring training through apprenticeship. The master could be anyone, one's father, elder brother or any relative or a person who is already in the profession. At one house we also got to know that the man started his cycle repairing shop without any prior training and learnt the work from his employee. Now he knows his work reasonably well. We observed that the people who have undergone such apprenticeships have been able to use their training much more than the ones who have acquired ITI or any other professional training.

Amongst the sculptors, the art has come down through generations. But there were some who have learnt it from Jaipur, Thanagazi or Akbarpur itself. Many initially moved to Akbarpur to learn the art but later settled down in the village. The murtis are generally of a particular design (Hindu gods and goddesses) and are mostly made on order. The marble used in murti making comes from either Makrana or Zhiri, both in Rajasthan.

2.5 Health and disability

There were few cases of disability noted like the cases of mental disability, orthopedic problem in legs and hands and also learning problems. There was a case where the child had an oversized head.

There were no special institutions for the disabled in Akbarpur. There seemed to be very little awareness about such institutions and the benefit that people can derive from them.

Even the health related problems were not many. Fertility rates were pretty good as there were a good number of households that had four or more children per couple. There was a Primary Health Center (PHC) and an Ayurvedic *Aushdhalaya* (dispensary) in the village. We did see the PHC working but the major issue that the villagers came up with was that the doctor and his assistant in the PHC were from Alwar town and hence were not available 24 X 7. As for the aushdhalaya we never found anyone in or outside the building for any medical purpose.

We also came across a dentist in the village with his own dental clinic but the person was not qualified for the job (only 10th pass).

Owners of the chemist shops were also treating patients for minor illnesses like fever, cold, etc. they were also treating the animals for their illnesses. We came across a chemist who was engaged in both and kept medicines for both humans and animals.

2.6 Politics

The village had a panchayat but there was no caste panchayat¹⁶ in the village. The sarpanch of the village was from the SC community. During the time that we spent in the village we realized that the Sarpanch was not such a prominent personality as one is bound to find in a village. In the Brahmin community he was not given much respect. However, given the time constraints, we could not really get to look into the social dynamics of the place. The striking thing was that when we were looking for the sarpanch none in the village seemed to know where his house was.

¹⁶ The caste panchayat is a body of the elders of a particular caste, who hear and resolve conflicts among members of the caste. The smallest unit of the caste panchayat is the village or tola, and a village may have one panchayat each for every caste community living in it. The federation of several panchayats in the area might be a sort of higher body where appeals might be made against the decisions of the village caste panchayat. The federations also periodically review and revise the rules governing the social life of a community, and form a platform for collective introspection. The caste panchayat has been given indirect recognition under the Panchayats (Extension in Scheduled Areas) Act, which considers the gram sabha "competent to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution." In Tribal caste panchayats in Central India, the audience forms an important part of the arbitration process. The elders, after hearing both sides of a case, ask for the audiences' opinion, and this latter influences the final judgement significantly.

FIELD REPORT—Alwar Urban

Slum: **FAMILY LINE**

Ward No: 37

City: Alwar Municipal Council

District: Alwar

State: Rajasthan

Researchers involved : Rashi Bhargava, Subrata Kundu and Vikram Meghwal

1. Process

1.1 Mapping

On the first day of the visit to our study sight, we visited different lanes and prepared a sketch of the area. This was done to get an understanding of the physical layout of the slum, to meet local people, and also to divide different areas among different researchers for the next stage. However, a final map was prepared once we had finished our interviews in the slum.

1.2 Methodology

Interview schedule was used to do the household census. The three local researchers had joined us after three days of our field work as initially we found it difficult to get local researchers. While the researchers from CORD gave an introduction about the purpose of study to the interviewees, the local researchers used to ask the questions from the schedule and the responses were filled up by the CORD researchers.

1.3 Changes made for data entry

‘House Work’ was given a new code of ‘5’. ‘Learning disability’ was interpreted as ‘Mental Retardation’. This was done because ‘Learning Disability’ was a broad category. ‘Management of schools’ was confined to two categories i.e. either government or private and the ‘private’ was given the code of ‘2’. Based on our village experience we had decided not to ask any question on ‘prior relationship’ in section C. Hence that column has been mostly left blank.

1.4 Limitations faced

Three days prior to our visit to the slum, another organization had visited it for the purpose of a literacy survey and hence the first few households were reluctant to provide any information. Then there was a death in one of the households during our survey in the slum and this delayed our work for another day and we had to visit these households the next day. Compared to the village the experience of doing field work in a slum was quite different. For example people in village were more forthcoming while talking about their village and they were also able to provide some insights into it, which was not the case in the slum. This may be due to the fact that the community bonds are stronger in a village compared to a slum, where families were mostly concerned about their own well being.

1.5 Observations on schedule

The schedule we were carrying was prepared with the purpose of village study. Hence in section E, No. 2 question was not found to be relevant. In Section C, the 'prior relationship' column was found to be not generating sufficient response in a household type of survey. The 'distance' column in section C, in most of the cases, has been filled up by asking the duration of time taken to reach the place. Hence it is quite possible that it is inaccurate. There were no VEC or PTA/MTA in the slum. However this aspect needs more verification. There were few cases of households, which had some agricultural land in their native villages.

1.6 Communication strategies

It was very common among the slum people that once we approached them to ask their family details, they were curious to know about the kind of benefit this survey would provide them. Besides, initially people were skeptical and even in some cases sarcastic about responding to our questions. However we remained calm and with a seriousness of purpose we kept on asking questions. This approach had a tremendous impact and finally even those who were totally unwilling to give interviews agreed to do it. Overall, people were found to be very friendly and cooperative in responding to our questions. There was one household, which totally refused to answer any question, and later on we got to know that some police cases were going on there. While introducing ourselves we honestly told them that our research was not directly going to benefit them. However, we also told them that our main effort was to enhance the quality of education and to ensure better educational outcomes for all, not only in terms of job opportunities but also in creating an aware citizenship.

During the HH census, there were quite a number of people who asked for any written material which could give some information about us and our organization. In fact, unlike the rural setting this was a constant feature in Family Line. After the positive response to the flyers in the initial stage we decided to use them at every HH. And we were glad to see that the flyers were successful in satisfying the people and also in fetching response from them.

2. Some Preliminary Insights

2.1. General Details

Almost all the houses were of all brick/concrete types, roads were clean and the lanes were clearly demarcated. Drinking water was supplied to almost every household through a well-laid out pipe system and almost every household had electricity. All these features were not matching with the picture of a slum as it is observed in different parts of India.

Though our first visit to the slum left us confused as the place did not look like a slum at all, but the Nagar Nigam had included it in the list of the *kacchi bastis*¹⁷ with some 281 households. However on our survey we found that it had 300 households with a population of around 1600.

2.1.1. Location

The entire Alwar city is divided into a number of schemes and Family Line, our field site comes under scheme 2. It was bounded by scheme 3 residential colony on two sides and by the cantonment area on the third. The slum was located in one side, on the

¹⁷ Kacchi basti or slum

road to the Alwar jail from Shivaji Park. The slum was divided into lanes and they were around seven in number. The lanes were quite well demarcated.

2.1.2. History

Earlier this land was of the king Mangal Singh's¹⁸ army. However, after independence, government of India claims it to be its own. The people living here had no legal papers, which could prove that the land was their own.

2.1.3. Social Composition

In the slum though the Balais¹⁹ were concentrated in the first three lanes one could also see that they were also scattered inside. In fact inside the slum there was a mixed population with Christians, Brahmins, Balais, Lakheras, Jain, Baniya, Sakka²⁰ and Rajputs, all living together and not divided into any kind of clusters. There were some Dhanka families too but they were placed in one particular lane of the slum. There were few tenants too who had either shifted with their entire family or had come to the city in search of work and thus have left their family in the village. Most of the better off households of the slum belonged to the Brahmin, Baniya, Jain and Rajput families.

Among the diverse caste groups Balais constituted about 50% of the population. Among the religious groups Hindus were predominant. There were a good number of Muslim households as well.

2.1.4. Drinking water and sanitation

There was a common water source, which was opposite to the road facing Family Line. All the households were connected with drinking water pipelines. This was provided free of cost by the Alwar district administration. While most of the households had flush toilets, there was a public toilet facility located in the site of the slum facing the cantonment area. This too was constructed by the district administration.

3. Economy

Among the Balais, most of the men used to work as daily wage labourers in Alwar town and the women in most of the households used to work as domestic help in scheme 3 and scheme 10.²¹ Women used to earn Rs300 to Rs350 per month per house. Our interactions with women show that mostly those who worked as domestic help used to work in more than two houses. Among the daily wage labourers most of the men used to take cycle rickshaws on rent. Among the full time workers some had their own cycle rickshaws. Many of the Balais were working as tailors and this was providing them a good source of regular income. Interestingly most of these people had taken their training informally from their close relatives. There were also some cases where individuals had taken training in tailor shops in Alwar town with a nominal fee and once working for say around six months or so they purchased a machine of their own and earned around Rs2000/ per month.

In the Balai cluster²², there was a printing press, where 13 workers were employed. The owner of this printing press was staying in scheme 3 but the premises belonged to a Balai family. While some of the workers were from the slum itself, others came from Alwar town. Among the Muslims too, most of the men and few women were engaged in

¹⁸ From 1874 to 1892.

¹⁹ Balais were listed as Scheduled Castes in Rajasthan

²⁰ Ethnic groups found among the Muslims in the slum.

²¹ Scheme 10 was located crossing the road, opposite to the Family Line.

²² Only the Balais were staying in first three lanes of the Family Line.

wage labour. Quite a few, especially in the general castes (Rajputs, Brahmins and the Baniyas) had government jobs in the Army, Police, etc as well. We also came across a number of young boys in the age-group of 14-19 who were drop-outs and were employed in shops as helpers and were paid very low salary for the full day's work. There were 3-4 households which were also engaged in the dairy enterprise. Among these there was one household which had a shop operating from the slum. This shop was mostly selling dairy products. However they had a house in Alwar, where they used to stay.

There were few *kirana* (grocery) shops and two Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) booths and a music cassettes shop was existing inside the slum. We also came across two or three households which had STD booths and two households which had motor cycle parts shop in Alwar town.

3.1. Skill Training and livelihood issues

There were a few cases of computer training and ITIs in the slum. However it was observed that those who had taken training in tailoring or in garage, were getting jobs after few months of training. However those who had opted for some polytechnic or ITI were not able to utilize the skills they had learnt. This shows that there was a mismatch between the training given and the market demand for skills imparted.

There was no Self Help Group (SHG) functioning in the slum. While an effort had been made by the ward councilor to open a SHG in the slum, it could not succeed. Besides there was some training program going on in Piyush Academy,²³ for women. This was for making soft toys and the training was being provided without any fee.

3.2. Assets

Though nearly all the houses in the slum were pucca but the distinction between the different houses in terms of the no. of storey, no. of rooms and also the outer look of the houses were visible. After gathering the details of the households, we also found that the most of the houses had TV and bicycle. And this was even found in the households where the earning member was a wage labourer or was a vendor or cart puller. In fact one of our respondents who puts up *ande ka thela* (egg seller, in a cart) told us that TV is a necessity as it is the only form of entertainment that they have. This kind of response was again a contrast to what we found in the village. Consumer items like TV, radio and air cooler which was a luxury in the village was a necessity in the slum. The same holds true for bicycle and two wheelers.

While the Balais had no domestic animals, the sakkas and other castes, the ones engaged in the dairy enterprise (Baniya and Brahmins) had domestic animals like Buffaloes. There were few households which had goats too but the number was very small.

But one thing that was common to both the rural and urban sites was that the difference in the level of the ownership of the items was marked more when caste was taken into account. Even in the slum, the higher castes looked in a more advantageous position than the SCs and the Sakkas (Muslims). Flush toilet was present in a significant no. of households and we also found quite a few using LPG as the cooking medium. In fact most of them answered that they used 'chulha' also mainly to cook 'rotis'. But again the difference was spotted for majority of the SCs who used chulha for all kinds of cooking because as one person remarked, 'Cylinder toh itna mehnga aata hai, gas kaise use karen'.²⁴

²³ This was the only private school which existed in Family Line.

²⁴ That is 'gas cylinder is so costly and hence it becomes difficult for us to afford it'.

4. Educational profile and issues

In nearly all the houses we found the younger lot going to school. The education level of the households located on the outer lanes of the slum, mainly lower middle class households, was quite good. Even the women in those households were educated though they were not usually employed. However, the older women in the slum were mainly illiterate but the issue of education for the young girls was an important one for them and whenever the daughter of the household was 12th pass or was in graduation, they took pride in that. Access to education in terms of the availability of schools was not a problem in the slum.

Among most of the Sakka (Muslim) households, the education level for the men and women of older age was pretty low and many when asked about their education answered, “quran padhi hai” or ‘urdu ki padhai ki hai”. But none of them mentioned anything about the Madarsa. This was also true for the girls in the family who were in the age group 16 & above.

4.1. Schools in Family Line

There were in total three schools in Family Line. Out of these, two were government schools and one was a private school. Both the government schools had up to standard V and they had only two teachers each. One private school had up to class VIII and it was located in the middle of the slum. Most of the children studying here were also from the slum.

The government school located inside the slum was established in 1960. However, it was located at that time outside Family Line. Later on this school was divided into two and one part moved inside Family Line. Students from this school used to go up to class VIII, as there was board exam at class VIII and many could not pass out of it. Here the total strength was 81.

The other government school was located outside the slum. However, the land was part of Family Line. It had a total strength of 50 students. Girl students from here used to go for higher studies at Ram Gopal Khanna School, which was in scheme 2 and was at a distance of one and half kilometers and boys used to go to No.5 school near Ambedkar Circle, which was at a distance of half kilometers from this school. Besides there was also one New Higher Secondary School near Bhagat Singh circle for 10+2. However few students from this school used to go there.

4.2. Dropouts

From our interaction with the teachers of these government schools we found that the drop outs were more in class I and II, and class III onwards there were less number of dropouts. During our visits to these schools we observed that mid day meal was being prepared for the students.

4.3. Quality Issues

In government schools all the classes were held simultaneously and in the open, as there were no classrooms. The lack of classrooms and inadequate teachers had implications for quality of education being imparted and affected the dropout rates of children. As most of the people in slum used to go for daily wage and the women used work as domestic help, there was no study atmosphere at homes. This had a detrimental affect on the education of the children²⁵. In the private school the teacher student ratio was

²⁵ This was the observation of government school teachers as well as of some of the residents in the slum.

better compared to government schools. However to analyze the quality of education aspect in this private school, in-depth study would be required.

4.4. Anganwadi Centre

There was one Anganwadi center, which had opened in last three/four months among the Balai cluster in the slum. One room for this was taken on rent at Rs. 300/ per month. The owner of this room told us that this center was functioning regularly.

5. Gender relations

Cases of child marriage were rare in this generation compared to the earlier generations. Both boys and girls were sent to school for education. While most males were full time workers, few females were in this category.

5.1. Attitude toward working women

One statement that really struck us during the household survey was made by a respondent in the Rajput family. When being asked about the work done by the women of the family, he remarked that “women in our families do not go to work outside home”. But at one household we did meet a Rajput woman who was appointed as a teacher in a private school and she was a double M.A. In the SC Households we came across a number of women who went out for work mostly as domestic help and as wage labour. But even in that community we sensed that the men were not very willing to send the women for work but due to their economic hardships they had to.

6. Health and Disability picture

There was no health centre in the slum. Generally people used to go to scheme I and scheme 10 government hospitals during times of illness. For common ailments they often used the Rajiv Gandhi Samanya Chikitsalaya, Alwar, which was located within a distance of three kilometers. This hospital was physically accessible to people and the cost of treatment was also low compared to the private sector in Alwar.

However we also found that there were some households which had to spend a lot for ailments like TB etc. in the private hospitals, which was a financial burden for the families. We also met a person among the Balais, who had skin allergy and this was preventing the person from going for regular work. This had adversely affected in their household income.

There were some cases of polio in the slum and there were some cases of mental retardation and deformity of the hand. During our interviews we observed that people were forthcoming on their own to talk about any cases of disability and even in cases of mental retardation they were willing to give information.

However there was no separate schooling system for the disabled. To get to know about the issues of livelihood for the disabled in-depth study would be required.

FIELD REPORT—Dewas Rural

Village: **JAMGODH**

Panchayat: Jamgodh

Block: Dewas

District: Dewas

State: Madhya Pradesh

Researchers involved: Srimanti Mukherjee and Subrata Kundu

The objective and the methodology of this phase have been elaborated earlier. Here we discuss the process, followed by the preliminary insights.

1. Process

We began our work in the village by first mapping the area. Obtaining the household census using the schedule designed for the survey followed this. This helped us acquire an understanding of the research area and develop familiarity with the community members. The map also eased our movements through the village during our household census.

During household census our task was to extract relevant information from every household to fill in our semi-structured household census form. The process also gave us an opportunity to initiate personal interaction with the local residents and build some rapport with the villagers. We also gave the flyers about RECOUP to the villagers who seemed interested in knowing the details of the project. These flyers also proved useful in cases where people wanted some written documents that could furnish them with basic information about our organization the project and us however the real rapport was constructed with the villagers through our daily visits and acknowledging their presence on every meeting. This should be seen as particularly useful for the following step of the research.

In the entire process we were helped by two local researchers, whom we appointed just before we started the mapping.

Limitations Faced

- Outbreak of an epidemic, “Chikunguniya” (certain viral fever), was a reason of concern.
- This epidemic and incessant rainfall compelled us to speed up the research process. As a result the ethnographic details of the village could not be made in a satisfactory manner.
- A great number of households, mainly of the Pinjaras (Muslims), had a huge family size, which took a lot of time to interview each of these households.
- Villagers were often inquisitive about our personal matters, like our salary, marital status and so on. In such cases one had to be very tactful, as the matters were quite sensitive and could break their trust on us if not dealt with carefully.

Observations on Schedule

- In section A, 'Management of schools' was reduced into two categories i.e. either government or private, codes 1 and 2 respectively.
- In section A, 'House Work' was given a new code of '5'.
- Section C, the 'prior relationship' column was found to be not generating sufficient response in a household type of survey.
- The 'distance' column in section C has been filled up by asking the duration of time taken to reach the place. Hence it is quite possible to be inaccurate.
- There were no Village Education Committee (VEC) or Parent Teacher Association or Mother Teacher Association (PTA/MTA) found in the village. However this aspect needs more verification.
- The 'caste panchayat'²⁶ column was found to be not relevant in section E. There is need for a discussion about filling up.
- 'Learning disability' was interpreted as 'Mental Retardation'.

2. Some Preliminary Insights

General Details

Our study village was located at a distance of 12 kilometers from the town of Dewas. The Dewas-Bhopal road (State Highway no. 18) bordered the village on one side. The village was well connected to the town. However the road connecting the village to Dewas town was in a poor state. On the way to the village from Dewas, one could observe various windmills on one side of the road. It was the wind energy station. The first half-kilometer stretch inside the village was a newly constructed road constructed under the "Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana"²⁷. There was a *nala*²⁸ flowing along the village. The two sides of the road were inhabited by the villagers. Our total number of surveyed households was 345 and the total surveyed population was about 1981. The average household size is therefore almost six members per household. The average household size was higher for Muslims compared to Hindus.

Local residents argued that it was mainly a Hindu dominated village, where the dominant castes were the *Khatris*²⁹ and the *Rajputs*³⁰. However, on surveying the area, our impression was that there was almost equal numeric dominance of the Muslims (Pinjaras³¹) as the high caste Hindus (Rajputs, khatis) in the village concerned. The entire population of the village was clustered into different *muhallas*³² on the basis of caste.

²⁶ Local level government at the village level

²⁷ Central Government Scheme for Rural Development. PMGSY was launched on December 2000 to provide all-weather - access to unconnected habitations. PMGSY is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme.

²⁸ Stream flowing down from the mountains

²⁹ High caste Hindu, as reported by the villagers. This Hindu community is established agriculturists and enjoys good status in Jamgodh. In the government lists they are classified as OBC in Madhya Pradesh.

³⁰ High caste Hindu

³¹ Also called Dhunias. They are the traditional cotton carders

³² clusters of households of the same caste in a same locality

Agriculture was the main occupation of the villagers followed by unskilled daily wage labor. The upper caste Hindus usually were found to own land and thus their main occupation was agriculture. The Muslims however, hardly owned any land and went out for *dadki*³³.

Roads were mainly *kuccha*³⁴ within the village proper. The only *pucca*³⁵ road bordering the village was the road made under the “Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna”. For drinking water all over the village at different places there were tube wells, which were constructed by the village panchayat. Besides, the ‘*nala*’ served as a source of water (mainly for irrigation) for the villagers. There were few wells in the village. Sewage and sanitation did not seem to be functional. In front of the panchayat house, where the health sub center was also located, there were puddles of stagnant water. Even in front of the sarpanch’s house this was the case. There were open drains with stagnant water trap all over the village.

The main crops produced in Jamgodh were soybean and wheat. However, soybean was the cash crop for the villagers. It was introduced in the early 1970s. The market for soybean products were well regulated. All the people who cultivate Soyabean, take their produce to the *mandi*³⁶ located in Dewas town which was at a distance of 12 kilometers from the village. Hence the villagers get a fair price for their crops.

Educational Profile and Issues

- There were three government schools in the village - two primary (one for girls and one for boys) and one middle. These schools were operating under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme of government of India. There were two private schools in the village. One was Sanskarjyoti and the other was Lalit Memorial. Both of them were primary schools. There used to be another private school in the village called ‘Saraswati Sishu Mandir’. However, it was no longer functional.
- It was observed that people in the village were eager to send their children to schools. Those who could afford were sending their children to the private schools. As there was no class X in the village, many of the girl students had to drop out after class VIII.
- Most students, who attended private schools in the village, went to Sanskarjyoti. This may be due to the fact that Lalit Memorial had just started (during the time of our field visit) new classes from class II to class V.
- Education status in general is low. The current enrolment status was equally low for all the ethnic groups. However, it seemed that among the OBCs dropout cases are most frequent. The Muslims and the Scheduled Castes had the largest proportion of “never enrolled” cases.
- From our census survey we broadly came across three major generations. In the oldest generation, we hardly found any literate women while some of the men were educated. In the second generation, the generation younger to the previous one, we found some women who were educated, some who were not educated, and some who were more educated than their husbands. The current generation girls, like the boys were getting almost equal education, if not more.

³³ daily wage labour

³⁴ non-concrete roads

³⁵ concrete roads

³⁶ market

Gender relations

- Child marriage was found to be prevalent in the village. This was true for both boys and girls but dominantly in the case of girls. (The age at marriage seemed to be 14(approx) for girls and 16-17 (approx) for boys). This is probably the cause of the numerical dominance of girl dropouts in school.
- Women who worked as daily wage laborers either in the agricultural or non-agricultural work in the village were from households which had insufficient amount of land to support their families. However, it seemed that the high caste women usually did not go out in the public space for work as did the low caste women. The general Indian norm of women and men inhabiting the private and the public space was also found prevailing here as well.
- In terms of educational outcomes for job opportunities, it was observed that girls were given education for raising a general level of awareness among them and they were not educated to pursue a career of their own. There were a few women who had become primary school teachers. We also found one woman who was a trained ASHA³⁷ worker.
- It seemed that the gender discriminatory attitudes and norms varied with age. The daughters and mothers (& mothers-in-law) did not need to follow the established norms (like pulling their *ghunghat*³⁸ in front of other men or in public spaces) as strictly as was expected to be followed by the daughter-in-law.

Skill Training and Livelihood Issues

- Main occupation was agriculture. Two main crops were grown – soybean and wheat. There were agencies giving loans as mentioned by the villagers. However they could not provide any concrete information about these agencies.
- The daily wage labourers were mostly working in the village (as agricultural labourers) or in the town (as construction workers, as loaders etc) of Dewas.
- Besides there were 7-8 tempos running from the village, which were owned by the villagers. However, whether they had had any formal training and had an authentic driving license is doubtful.
- There was also a ‘*dudh*’³⁹ society’⁴⁰. The owner of this society used to collect milk from the villagers and sells it in Dewas town.
- There were few cases of formal trainings like ITI being taken by the villagers. More people were found trained in varied types of private training. We also found a person being trained in veterinary care.
- Informal training included stitching training being taken by few ladies in the village.

³⁷ Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA). ASHA is the community level health worker who provides first contact care to people in the villages. This is a part of the National Rural Health Mission launched in 2005 by the Government of India to provide health care access at the local level.

³⁸ veil

³⁹ milk

⁴⁰ dairy enterprise

Health and Disability

- Health condition of the villagers in general was characterized by malnutrition and diseases (mainly fever and stomach disorder). Child health, it seemed was poor.
- There was a health sub-center operating in one room of the “panchayat bhavan”. The most common ways of treatments were through injections and saline bottles. When we visited the village the Chikunguniya (a certain kind of viral fever) was all over the place. Almost every house had cases of the fever. In few houses we also found deaths attributed to the fever.
- In the village it was observed that most of the disability was due to polio. We also encountered cases where the child was deaf or dumb. Several cases of mental retardation were also found. People were not quite sympathetic and treated these patients quite harshly. They in fact seemed sort of outcaste from the mainstream.
- There were no special institutions for the disabled in Jamgodh itself. People did not seem to be much aware of the utility and importance of such institutions as well.

Politics

- There was no caste panchayat in the village. Only elected panchayat existed.
- The sarpanch was a Yadav⁴¹ although Rajputs and Khatris were the dominant castes. It was interesting to know that the current sarpanch was a woman.

Communication Strategies

The flyer, specially the Hindi version proved to be an efficient instrument in communicating our project to the people in the village. People felt much more confident when they had the flyer for themselves and wanted to know more about the project. This not only helped us in persuading them to answer our questions, but also showed us how aware they were – they would ONLY respond to our questions when we gave them our flyers which assured them their anonymity.

⁴¹ Yadav is a Hindu caste considered as OBC in India.

FIELD REPORT – Dewas Urban

Slum: SANJAYNAGAR

Ward Number: 14

City: Dewas Municipal Corporation

District: Dewas

State: Madhya Pradesh

Researchers involved : Shyamasree Dasgupta & Srimanti Mukherjee

The objective and the methodology of this phase have been elaborated earlier. Here we discuss the process followed by the preliminary insights.

1. Process:

We began our work in Sanjaynagar by mapping the entire area. This was followed by the household census with the aid of the schedule we had fielded earlier in Jamgodh village. This not only gave us an idea of the entire slum, but also helped us to initiate an informal interaction with the local people, which made both us & the local residents acquainted with each other. This map also helped us find our way in the slum.

During household census our task was to extract relevant information from every household to fill up our semi-structured household census form. During this time we had a chance to interact with the members of every household personally and tried to build up a rapport which would facilitate our future visits to the place.

To assist us throughout our survey, we appointed two local researchers who guided us and helped us know the place better.

Limitations Faced

- When we visited the slum the “Chikunguniya” (certain viral fever) was all over the slum almost in the form of an epidemic. Almost every house had cases of the fever. Even our local researcher caught the virus. We even encountered a few deaths attributed to this.
- In many cases the respondents mistook our survey as a BPL (Below Poverty Line) one and hence there was a tendency to hide the true asset situation.
- They were often apprehensive about being asked about electricity, land assets and so on for a project on education.
- In one private school in spite of repeated visits we could not get the detailed data of the school as the principal was out of station and was not available.

Observations on the Schedule

- The space saying s/o (w/o) does not have any provision for d/o. For a girl who is divorced and is the head of the family should we not mention her father/mother’s name?

- We found cases of children going to *Madarsas*⁴². *Madarsas* do not have the concept of classes. What do we do in case of these when filling up the column of class completed? We have kept it blank.
- We have added a code- 3 in the column of “management of school” in cases of *Madarsas*.
- We found it extremely difficult to ask people about their prior relationships.
- Learning disability is an absolutely recent urban concept. It would have been easier had there been a column of “mental retardation”. So we have changed the “learning disability” into “mental retardation”.
- We found a number of cases where the disability was in the upper limbs (there were cases where the person had lost their fingers and sometimes where they had lost their arms). Where do we put it in?
- Concepts related to *panchayat*⁴³, VEC are not applicable in case of an urban census form.
- It was really difficult to explain the difference between the two to a person living in the slum during the census.
- We have added code -5 in the “work status” column for housework.
- We have added code- 4 in the “education status” column for cases where the person concerned has completed more than class 10.
- People often were not sure about their age and rounded up the figures.
- Management of schools finally was reduced to 2 categories (1- government, 2 – private), apart from the *Madarsas* (code 3).

2. Some Preliminary Insights:

General Details

Sanjaynagar slum (area: 2 square kilometres approximately) was the selected urban site for Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. It was bordered on one side by the river Nagdhaman. In the stretch of 7 kilometres from Dewas town to the slum there were a number of factories and companies situated. This slum came under the Ayodhya Basti Yojna of the Madhya Pradesh government and the board right at the entrance of the slum told us it came under ward number 14. We also learnt that the concerned slum was established formally in 1981-82. According to the Nagarpalika Nigam (Municipal Corporation), the total number of households excluding the tenants was 383. Our surveyed households were 352 including the tenants. The total surveyed population was 1689. Average family size was close to five.

The slum had a mixed social composition and there were almost no clusters found. However, there were a good proportion of scheduled castes like Chamars and Balais and ethnic minorities like Muslims. We found that almost all the Muslim population clustered together at the entrance of the slum. Within the slum at two different places, clusters of 8-10 houses were found belonging to the Harijans⁴⁴.

⁴² Educational institutions attended by Muslims. No concept of classes. The Arabic word “Madrasa” generally has two meanings : 1. In its more common literal & colloquial usage , it means school; 2. In its secondary meaning , a Madrasa is an educational institution offering instruction in the Islamic subjects including , but not limited to the Quran , the sayings (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad , jurisprudence (fiqh) and law.

⁴³ Local level government in villages

⁴⁴ Untouchables. term coined by Mahatma Gandhi

The residents were mostly migrants – old and new - the reason for migration being purely occupational. Varieties of occupations were observed amongst which “tthekedaari” (contractual work) in private companies was the most frequent. However, there were a few permanent government and private jobs. There were some who had shops of their own (electronic repairing shops, grocery stores, tailoring shops), mainly within Sanjaynagar itself. The slum also had a ration shop.

Living condition seemed to be not very poor. There were clean, concrete roads inside the slum, with a proper sanitation system. The drains were cemented and quite clean. There were a number of borings, wells found there but the residents often complained about water scarcity. At the entrance there was a huge structure from which the residents informed us that electricity was supplied in Sanjaynagar. Houses were mainly “semi-pucca”, with flush toilet facility and permanent connection of electricity with a typical set of assets which included TV and Cycle. Almost half of the total households were using gas as their medium of cooking. The economic condition of the people varied to a great extent. The slum had communities of mixed variety ranging from rich people (owning cars, fridges and air coolers) to poor ones (with almost no amenities in their home).

Education Profile and Issues

- There are five schools amongst which one is the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) run school. People did not seem to be satisfied at all with both the infrastructure and the teaching staff of the SSA school. The school runs in two shifts – morning and afternoon. There was also a baalwari⁴⁵ and we found a lady who is the supplier of the *poshan ahaar* (nutritious food) in the slum (part of the anganwadi system). However the anganwadi is now non-functional. The other schools were all private, viz. St. Thomas School (middle school), Saraswati Shishu Mandir (high school), Little Angel Public School (nursery), and Saraswati Gyanmandir.
- People in the village were motivated to get the best education facilities for their children, but these facilities didn’t come cheap. A local resident complained that the comparatively well-off can afford to send their children to the private school. There, as teachers are being paid more, due to high fees given by the students, they are bound to come in time to the school and teach better. But the poor can only afford to send them in a government school. But if its condition is bad, then the poor become helpless. One of the most economically weak families where none of the members were literate, and without any adult male member, complained that even the *Sarkari*⁴⁶ School demanded Rs 50 from them to get their child admission there. It seemed that the children of families with comparatively educated parents and comparative economic affluence went to government schools outside Sanjaynagar, mostly in Chimnabai Girls High School, Dewas and Number 1 School, Dewas.
- We found a number of Muslim families where children go to Madarsas. It seemed that among the Muslims fewer girls attend school than the Hindus. Usually girls discontinue after 5th class it seemed in case of poor households. People consider a class-8 pass-out to be highly educated. Among the only cluster found in

⁴⁵ Playschool

⁴⁶ Government

Sanjaynagar, a cluster of Harijans, (which also included one Muslim family), extreme poverty prevailed and education level was almost nil.

- From our census survey we came across differences in the educational and work status of women of three generations. In the oldest generation (ages 45 years & above), we hardly found any literate women while some of the men were educated. In the second generation (18-44 years), some were unlettered; some had very basic literacy, some were highly educated. The current generation (0-17 years) girls, just like the boys were getting almost equal education opportunities, if not more. We found a number of families where the *bahu*⁴⁷ was more educated than the other members of the family. Not only that, even in some cases we found that the adult female was the only educated person in the family.
- There was low motivation on the part of women to work outside homes even if they were educated. We also met some women who had discontinued working after child birth. The men folk were mostly educated and in some service.
- Families with educated mothers were much more confident and aware. We found a family where the husband supported her wife to continue her study further after her marriage and she is now running the *baalwari* in Sanjaynagar while her husband takes care of the household chores and has absolutely no education. Interestingly in one household we found a lady who had never been to any school but used to spend time with the teachers of a school. There she acquired enough knowledge even to teach the children and in fact she taught in the *baalwari* for quite a few years. It did not seem that the gender bias with respect to son and daughter is very strong in any of the families.
- In many families it was found that they had sent their children to their maternal uncle's place for studies, in some cases because they felt that there were better schools there and in other cases because they could not afford the education expenses here.
- There was interest and awareness for higher education. We met a person who had done his BE (Bachelor of Engineering) and was practicing C language on his own computer at his house.
- Although private schools were quite popular in the area, the concept of private tuitions was not as popular.

Gender Relations

- The usual Indian norm of the men inhabiting the public and the women inhabiting the private sphere is noticed here.
- Among the dropouts in the age group of 5-14 years, a clear gender disparity is observed with many girls dropping out as compared to boys.
- The out-married daughters even if a bit educated, did nothing other than household chores in most cases.
- After a certain age (approximately 18 for boys & 14 for girls), the parents marry off their sons and daughters.
- Gender disparities in attitude, it seemed, varied with age. The daughters and the mothers did not have to comply with the existing gender norms as strictly as is applicable for the daughter-in-law in most cases, i.e. daughters-in-law wore the *ghungats* rather than the others.

⁴⁷ term used in Hindi, meaning Daughter-in-law

Skill Training & Livelihood Issues

- There is an ITI in Dewas. Still we found very few people having successfully completed ITI training. However, even in those few who actually have successfully completed it (mainly electrical courses), there were no girls found. In most of the cases they have not even heard about the name of ITI. We found only one case of polytechnic and one case of NGO training. We found a few cases of NCC training. However, one point to be noted is that in all these cases none were girls. A few had had informal training (private sewing, nursing and beautician training).
- However, there was hardly any fruitful utilization of any of these trainings in their occupational sphere. Thus we probably cannot label any of these trainings as professional per se. A number of persons were drivers – either they drove their own car or they drove others' cars. However, when we asked them about their training and license they could hardly give us any satisfactory answer. We even found cases where they were driving without valid licenses.

Health & Disability

- Extremely miserable condition of child health. When we visited the slum the Chikunguniya (a certain kind of viral fever) was all over the slum. Almost every house had cases of the fever. In few houses we also found death cases from the fever. Due to extreme poverty in many of the households we found the members suffering from diseases (fever, stomach disorder) and malnutrition.
- There were three clinics in the slum. However the quality of treatment provided and the authenticity of the doctors seemed doubtful. We found one registered doctor residing in the slum but posted outside Sanjaynagar. Injections and saline bottles seemed to be the most frequent treatment. Immunisation seemed to be a common phenomenon. There are no health centres in Sanjaynagar. People usually visit the district hospital in Dewas (7kms from Sanjaynagar).
- *Bahus* with new born babies were mostly in their natal homes. However we did not come across daughters who had come here for child delivery. So it is not possible to comment on maternal health.
- People in Sanjaynagar do not have enough money for post-operative treatment. Thus post operative problems were frequent as they could not continue the treatment. This led to further deterioration of their financial condition because in most cases they lose the working capability. Sometimes the person concerned is the only earning member of the family. This in turn further impoverished them, forming a really vicious circle of poverty.
- Disability cases were mostly from polio damaging their legs. A few cases of persons incapacitated due to accidents at work place were also reported. Mental retardation seemed to be frequent there and in some cases proved to be a genetic phenomenon. People were not quite sympathetic and treated them quite harshly.
- There were no special institutions for the disabled in Sanjaynagar itself. People did not seem to be much aware of the utility and importance of such institutions as well. Only in one family we found the parents have sent their deaf and dumb son to a special residential school in Indore. However, inclusive schools for the disabled were not found in Sanjaynagar.

Politics

The *parshad*⁴⁸ belonged to the “Bharatiya Janta Party”⁴⁹. He seemed to be very unhappy about the change of the Chief Minister and hence the political scenario in MP. He mentioned that due to this fact the flow of fund to Sanjaynagar under “Ayodhya Basti Yojna”⁵⁰ has been restricted tremendously. He seemed to be quite helpful and stressed on the fact that there was absolutely no caste discrimination in the slum. However, later we learnt that Muslims were excluded from the survey last conducted in Sanjaynagar. This can be attributed to the *parshad*. There was an evident disagreement between the opinion of the Hindus and the Muslims on the integrity of the *parshad*. The Hindus of the slum seemed to be quite happy with the performance of the *parshad*. However, some women complained about him saying that he had taken money from them and promised that he would make them a part of a particular SHG, whose *adhyaksh*⁵¹ is his wife. He had not kept his promise, nor had he returned the money. The Muslims however, kept on complaining, “*Muslim logon ko naukri kahan milta hai...*” (“Muslims do not get jobs”) They seemed quite dissatisfied with the *Parshad*.

Communication Strategies

The flyer, specially the Hindi version proved to be an efficient instrument in communicating our project to the people in the slum. People felt much more confident when they had the flyer for themselves and wanted to know more about the project. Some even asked whether they could contact us in the contact numbers given in that flyer. We found people actually reading it before they answered our queries. This not only helped us in convincing them to answer our questions, but also showed us how aware they were – they would only respond to our questions when we gave them our flyers which assured them their anonymity.

⁴⁸ Municipal Councillor of the slum

⁴⁹ An Indian political party

⁵⁰ Project undertaken by MP government to develop two slums in all ways possible

⁵¹ President